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A secret message for Turner in the top of a teapot?

We met Adm. Stansfield Turner, the director of Central Intelligence, in a seventh-floor conference room at the CIA's headquarters across the Potomac from Washington. He bounded into the room where we had assem-

bled with a hearty, "Hi, I'm Stan Turner," then proceeded to shake hands with each of us with all the enthusiasm of a candidate for high office.

The speculation is that he is exactly that. He is said to regard the CIA as a stop on the way to appointment by his Annapolis classmate Jimmy Carter as chairman of the Joint Chiefs or Chief of Naval Operations.

And, like a good politician, he appeared to be saying more than he actually was. The admiral's prepared remarks were a short lecture on the problem of secrecy in an open society and the press's responsibility in helping government deal with it.

He acknowledged the need to rebuild the agency's credibility and assured us of his desire to see it done. He stressed his hope to see more low-level information pushed out the bottom while more closely guarding high-level secrets. He talked about the need for keeping some secrets not because of their value but to



ADMIRAL
TURNER

*Is the CIA chief
campaigning?*

keep the other side from learning how we obtained them.

The question period was better. The admiral's assessment of the balance of power was a short, sober examination of the pluses and minuses on both sides that concluded that the United States is "still the superior strategic force." He lamented the fact that the Russian navy, as the new boy on the block, often got more publicity than it deserved.

In the middle of the talk, we were startled to see a door open and two jacketed waiters wheel in a cart to serve coffee around the table. The senior one left the room briefly and returned with a pot of tea for the admiral. "Thank you, George," the admiral said as he dismissed the men.

That evening, discussing the incident, a group of us decided that Adm. Turner and his predecessors have all been front men. "George" is and has always been the CIA's boss, delivering instructions to his underlings in the tops of teapots.